

In the Somali custom just described the part played by the child Children of living parents Is unambiguous and helps to throw light on the ^{of living} ~~of living~~ obscurer cases which precede. Such a child is clearly supposed to ^{^Jrentiy} impart the virtue of longevity to the milk of which It partakes, and supposed so to transmit it to the newly married pair who afterwards drink of ^{to impart} the milk. Similarly, we may suppose that in all marriage rites at l^{^evfty} least, if not in religious rites generally, the employment of children of living parents Is intended to diffuse by sympathy the blessings of life and longevity among all who participate in the ceremonies. This Intention seems to underlie the use which the Malagasy make of the children of living parents In ritual. Thus, when a child is a week old, it is dressed up in the finest clothes that can be got, and is then carried out of the house by some person whose parents are both still living; afterwards it Is brought back to the mother. In the act of being carried out and in, the infant must be twice carefully lifted over the fire, which is placed near the door. If the child is a boy, the axe, knife, and spear of the family, together with any building tools that may be in the house, are taken out of it at the same time. "The Implements are perhaps used chiefly as emblems of the occupations in which it is expected the Infant will engage when it arrives at maturer years; and the whole may be regarded as expressing the hopes cherished of his activity, wealth, and enjoyments." * On such an occasion the service of a person whose parents are both alive seems naturally calculated to promote the longevity of the Infant For a like reason, probably, the holy water used at the Malagasy ceremony of circumcision is drawn from a pool by a person whose parents are both still living.² The same Child of Idea may explain a funeral custom observed by the Sihanaka of ^{living} Madagascar. After a burial the family of the deceased, with their employed near relatives and dependents, meet in the house from which the in funeral corpse was lately removed " to drink rum and to undergo a purifying ^{ntes<} and preserving baptism called *fafy ranom-bbahangy** Leaves of the

lemon or lime tree, and the stalks of two kinds of grass, are gathered and placed in a vessel with water. A person, both of whose parents are living, is chosen to perform the rite, and this 'holy water' is then sprinkled upon the walls of the house and upon all assembled within them, and finally around the house outside." ³ Here a person whose parents are both living appears to be credited with a more than common share of life and longevity | from which it naturally follows that he is better fitted than any one else to perform a ceremony intended to avert the danger of death from the household. The notion that a child of living parents is endowed with a

¹ Rev. "William Ellis, *History of Sihanaka," The Antananarivo Annual and Madagascar* (London, N.D.), i. 151 sq.

- Rev. W. Ellis, *op. at.* i. 180. reprint of the second four numbers, j. Pearse, "Customs connected 1881-1884) (Antananarivo, 1896) p.

with' Death and Burial among the